

# the pulse

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Photo by Thomas C. Balfour

**On the cover**

*The United States Marine Band—"The President's Own"—performs as guests arrive for USU's 33rd Commencement Ceremony, May 19, at DAR Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. (See story, page 6.)*



# USU alum shares unique perspective about TBI at CNRM meeting

By Christine Creenan-Jones



Photo by SPC Ernest E. Sivia III

*Navy Captain (Dr.) James Hancock, a USU alumus and director of medical services at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, was the keynote speaker at the CNRM annual meeting. He discussed traumatic brain injury from both the patient and provider's perspective, two vantages he has experienced as both a physician and wounded warrior.*

The Center for Neuroscience and Regenerative Medicine held its annual meeting at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), May 21-22. During the event, several USU experts shared important research findings about Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) – a common, but vexing wound affecting more than 200,000 servicemembers worldwide.

The keynote speaker, Navy Captain (Dr.) James Hancock, director of medical services at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, also provided a unique glimpse into the troublesome disorder from both a physician and patient's point of view – a vantage few others in military medicine have experienced fully.

Before his war injury, Hancock, a seasoned combat surgeon, had treated many servicemembers with TBIs, especially while serving on the front-lines in Iraq and Afghanistan, where homemade-bomb attacks are common.

TBIs – though prevalent at home too – are different, more severe, when they happen in theater operations, believes

Hancock, a USU graduate (SoM '95) with extensive deployment experience.

"Brain injuries are more than what you see in a lab," he told audience members attending CNRM's annual meeting. "They need to be placed in the context of what Soldiers experience as well."

In Afghanistan, servicemembers face many challenges, from dangerous living conditions and extreme climate changes to separation anxiety and emotional stress. This can affect TBI, said Hancock, who was badly injured by an IED himself.

Hancock's TBI began impacting other parts of his life, including sleep, balance and various facets of his personality. Healing was a long, sometimes frustrating process, especially since the care he received back home was fragmented at times.

Like researchers at the CNRM, Hancock wanted to excel TBI fronts, so he began looking for ways to improve warrior care. His work caught the attention of several senior military

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# New USAFP President Installed via Skype

By Sharon Willis



Courtesy Photo/USAFP



Courtesy Photo/USAFP

USU graduates are used to addressing and overcoming challenges, and as an Army physician who has been assigned to support some of the largest combat units, Col. (Dr.) Michael Place (SoM '91) has certainly had his share.

Place was elected President of the Uniformed Services Academy of Family Physicians (USAFP), and his installation was to be held at the 2012 USAFP national meeting in front of the membership with some amount of pomp and circumstance. But, the incoming president was deployed to Afghanistan, and the national meeting was in Las Vegas, some 7,500 miles away, presenting a slight dilemma for the (parent organization) American Academy of Family Physicians leadership.

But on March 22, in front of an estimated 600 uniformed family physicians and their guests, Place joined his Army, Navy, Air Force and Public Health Service colleagues via Skype, the Internet phone service with webcam imaging. Attendees burst into wild applause and gave Place a standing ovation as his image appeared on screen – seated inside a stark military tent in the combat theater of operations, a world away from the glitz and glamour of the Vegas strip.

As the fanfare settled, Glen Stream, M.D., M.B.I., president of AAFP, turned the podium webcam around so that Place, who has rarely missed a chapter meeting in almost two decades, could see the audience.

"When Dr. Stream turned the camera to the members of the USAFP during the installation, I was

absolutely overwhelmed," Place was quoted in an AAFP News article. "The USAFP annual meeting is not only a CME extravaganza and a display of some of the finest clinical research in primary care, but truly is a reunion of friends who span the globe in service to our nation.

"Some of my closest friends were there," he continued. "For that group of people to give me a standing ovation was profoundly humbling."

"I've installed 16 chapter presidents during my years on the AAFP Board of Directors and I've heard some pretty good speeches," said Stream in an AAFP blog post about the event. "But nothing compares to that inspiring day."

Place is the commander of the 10th Combat Support Hospital. While deployed he also serves as the commander of a medical task force. He has previously served as division surgeon for the 101st Airborne Division, and command surgeon for the U.S. Army Cadet Command, among others assignments.

Others with USU ties joining Place on the current USAFP leadership team are President-elect Air Force Lt.Col. (Dr.) Pamela Williams, former assigned faculty in the USU Department of Family Medicine, Past-President Navy Capt. (Dr.) Maureen Padden (SoM '92), and Board of Directors members Air Force Maj. (Dr.) Marc Childress (SoM '02), Air Force Lt. Col. (Dr.) Christopher Paulson (SoM '96), Air Force Lt. Col. (Dr.) John Hallgren

(SoM '95), Army Lt.Col. (Dr.) Michael Oshiki (SoM '98), Air Force Capt. (Dr.) Brooke Sciuto (SoM '10), Army Capt. (Dr.) Caitlyn Rerucha (SoM '11), and Air Force 2nd Lt. Rebecca Lauters (SoM '14).

## Important USU Security Notes:

- USU badge identification (ID) cards are to be worn at all times while on University property. Your ID badge should be displayed on your front between your shoulders and waist. If you see someone without their ID badge challenge them. Remember—security is everyone's responsibility.
- USU badge ID cards should not be worn off site. You should not advertise where, and by whom, you are employed. OPSEC, OPSEC, OPSEC!
- Is your security investigation/clearance up to date? If you are unsure, inquire at the Security office.
- When you renew your USU badge ID card, check your CAC expiration date as well.
- If you are a contractor and you need to renew your USU badge ID, please bring with you a signed memorandum of employment on USU letterhead.



# Artino wins Award for Second Straight Year

By Sharon Willis

Navy Cmdr. Anthony Artino, Ph.D., associate professor and health-care administrator in the Department of Preventive Medicine and Biometrics, was presented the Charles R. Loar Literary Award from the Navy Medical Service Corps for the second consecutive year.

"I'm extremely honored to receive the Loar Award a second time," Artino said. "Although none of us conduct research for the purpose of receiving an award, it's always nice when others acknowledge our work. This award is especially meaningful to me because it comes from a Navy organization, and it seems they appreciate our goal of evaluating the factors underlying poor performance in medical school. Ultimately, we believe a better understanding of these factors is a key first step in developing suitable

remediation plans for struggling medical students."

The Loar Award recognizes excellence in professional and technical writing and is presented to an officer whose paper focuses on health-care administration, leadership, or management, particularly of interest to military medicine or Navy medicine. Winners receive the award during the annual Lewis E. Angelo Professional Symposium.

"This is the second year in a row I have accepted this award on Tony's behalf. This award represents Tony's commitment to outstanding scholarship and research," said Cmdr. Glen Diehl, program director for USU's Master of Public Health Administration and Policy degree program. "We appreciate his hard work and his ability to put USU front and center in everyone's mind when it comes to education."

## Alum shares perspective about TBI at CNRM meeting

*Continued from page 3*

leaders, including Navy Admiral Michael Mullen, former chairman of the Joints Chief of Staff, who asked Hancock to help form a "Gray Team" of medical personnel with combat experience to establish new, improved military protocols for how TBI was handled on the battlefield.

Although, the Gray Team has made considerable headway for a troublesome problem dubbed the signature injury of today's war, TBI is still a very complex wound. At the meeting, Hancock implored audience members to find solutions, especially people at the CNRM who have the knowledge and expertise to continue making a big difference.

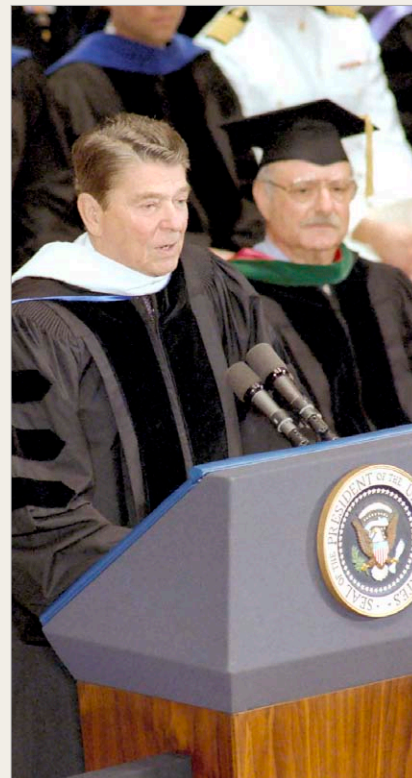
"Get out of your box, be inventive," he told them. "You are the future. You

are going to solve some of the biggest problems out there."

The creative, analytical thinking Hancock encouraged at the meeting has been driving CNRM researchers for the past four years. They are tackling TBI from all angles, which includes developing new diagnostic measures and improved treatment methods so wounded warriors have better, more comprehensive care. Research at the CNRM is also yielding promising results in cutting-edge scientific fields like biomarker identification and neuroregeneration – disciplines that could lead to a major breakthrough for TBI.

Visit [www.usuhs.mil/cnrm](http://www.usuhs.mil/cnrm) for more information about the center.

## USU 40th Anniversary Trivia #2 Winner



Congratulations to Roberta McIntyre, administrative program specialist, for being the first person to correctly answer last issue's trivia question:

Many distinguished people have spoken at USU's graduation over the years, including this commencement speaker who said, "Yours is the only medical school in America which trains physicians to be ready for duty on the bottom of the ocean or on the surface of the moon and any place in between."

McIntyre answered Ronald Reagan, who was the keynote speaker at USU's commencement in 1987.

# USU faculty participate in IOM Forum on Global Violence Prevention Workshop

By Sharon Willis

USU faculty played key roles in the recent Institute of Medicine (IOM) Forum on Global Violence Prevention workshop on “The Contagion of Violence” that was held April 30-May 1, 2012, in Washington, DC.

Dr. Brian Flynn and Dr. Robert Ursano participated in the high visibility event geared towards health care providers and violence prevention practitioners worldwide.

Flynn, a retired Rear Admiral and former Assistant Surgeon General in the U.S. Public Health Service, and associate director of USU’s Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress (CSTS), served as a member of the workshop planning committee and facilitated a session on “Scaling up or Translating Programs to Interrupt the Contagion of Violence.” Ursano, professor and chair of USU’S Department of Psychiatry and Director, CSTS, was a guest speaker and facilitator for a six-person panel entitled “Theories, Process, and

Mechanisms of Contagion” which addressed how and why violence spreads, and explored the internal and external processes and mechanisms at work, along with the interruption of those processes and mechanisms and their use for spreading non-violent messaging and practices.

According to the IOM’s website, the contagion of violence is a “universal phenomenon, occurring at all levels of society and affecting a broad spectrum of individuals. It occurs globally, within all societies, and is transmitted through interpersonal relationships, families, peer-groups, neighborhoods, and cultures. As the body of violence prevention evidence grows, several characteristics of violence are emerging: 1) patterns of violence are often cyclical, much like disease epidemics, 2) violent acts co-occur with (and sometimes directly cause) other violent acts, 3) exposure to violence normalizes the use of

violence as a response, 4) violence can be prevented, and the transmission of violence can be interrupted.”

The two-day workshop explored ways to prevent and end the contagion of violence and looked at challenges in countries where the burden of violence is the greatest. Flynn and Ursano were among a number of experts drawn from the public and private sectors and academic organizations to participate in the workshop.

Established in 1970 under the charter of the National Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Medicine provides objective, evidence-based advice to policymakers, health professionals, the private sector, and the public. The Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, and National Research Council together make up the independent, nonprofit National Academies.

## HPRC Health Tips

*The Human Performance Resource Center Health Tips is intended to provide the USU community with information to help develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Check out the HPRC website at: <http://humanperformanceresourcecenter.org>.*

### Science article asks: Are we winning the war against PTSD?

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has been one of the military’s top priorities over the past few years, especially after reports of projected rates as high as 30 percent in veterans. However, a May 2012 Science

article points to new findings that might indicate lower PTSD rates currently across all services—between 2.1 and 13.8 percent. Taking into consideration under-reporting due to stigma, the authors suggest these low rates might be due to the targeted attention that PTSD has received, along with interest in bolstering Warfighter resilience. The article cites the military’s adoption of resilience programs such as “Battlemind” as possible contributors to these low rates. The authors recommend more in-depth research to determine the effectiveness of such programs.

### Make problem solving a family affair

Families are constantly confronted with problems and the need to find solutions for them.

In addition to all the challenges of everyday life that civilian families go through, military families also have to cope with additional stressors specific to uniformed life, which makes the ability to solve problems a crucial skill.

Individuals tend to fare better in relationships when they discuss challenges with one another and then directly act on those problems. A book by two researchers suggests the following process for making decisions:

- Specifically state the issue
- State why the issue is important
- Brainstorm and discuss possible solutions to the issue
- Decide on a realistic solution
- Pick a specific amount of time to try the solution



# Graduates embark on next stage of 'Caring for Those in Harm's Way'

By Helen Hocknell/NSAB Public Affairs staff writer  
All photos taken by Thomas C. Balfour

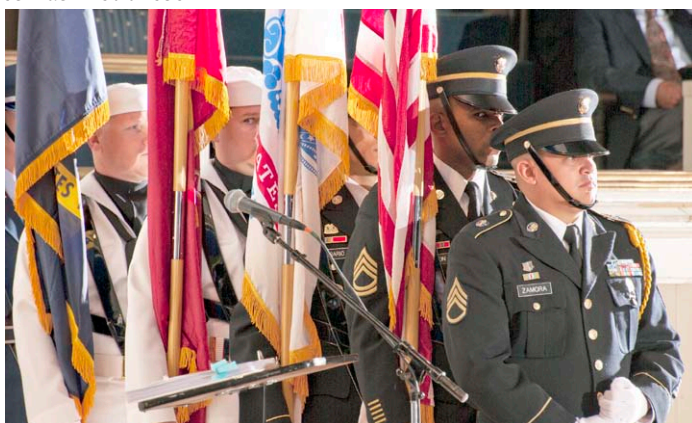
More than 200 uniformed and civilian medical professionals and scientists received degrees at the 33rd commencement exercise for the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) at Daughters of the American Revolution Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C., May 19.

"It is the university's duty to not only educate physicians, nurses and scientists and to produce uniformed officers and leaders, but also to help forge outstanding human beings men and women of integrity, compassion, and loyalty to the values that make our country great," said USU President Dr. Charles L. Rice. "I'm confident that each of these graduates has met these goals. They have chosen the path of public service and are dedicating their life's work to the greater good. It is both an awesome and a noble choice; one that demands humility and sacrifice, but brings untold rewards."

Degrees awarded during the ceremony included 158 Doctor of Medicine degrees, 55 Biomedical Sciences graduate degrees, 35 Master of Science degrees, and six Doctor of Philosophy degrees.

Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Charles B. Green, the United States Air Force Surgeon General delivered the commencement address, emphasizing the importance of three core areas: jobs, people and learning.

"The most important job you'll have is the one you're in... and the patient in front of you is the most important one you'll treat," said Green. He noted that although graduates should feel proud of all they'd accomplished so far, they should not think of this as the end of their formal education.



"The reality of a successful residency is teaching doctors how much they don't know," said Green, citing coups and volcanic eruptions as great learning experiences of his career. An expert in disaster relief operations, Green planned and led humanitarian relief efforts in support of Operation Fiery Vigil following the 1991 eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines.

Air Force Capt. Mark Cheney, who just received his medical degree, said he is excited for the future as he prepares to report to San Antonio Military Medical Center in Texas.

"I know my classmates and I are all very appreciative of the faculty, family, friends, and others who supported us during our time at USU," said



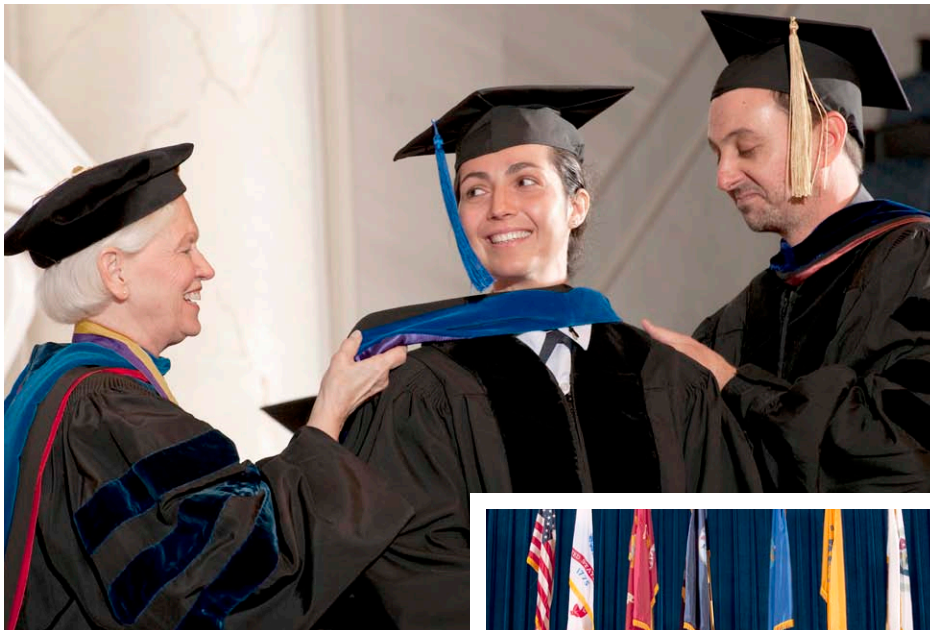
Cheney. Other graduates are headed to locations as far-ranging as Florida, Mississippi and Hawaii.

Lt. Cmdr. Chris S. Martin, USU Chaplain, delivered the invocation, giving special thanks for the family and friends assembled. Martin blessed the graduates as they began their life-long work as "healers, comforters, providers, listeners and explorers."

May they never stop learning, but always be studious. To lead as wise and compassionate military officers, and to always strive for the best, caring for those who go in harm's way," said Martin.



# 2012 USU Commencement





## USU's tutoring club: A mind for helping

By Christine Creenan-Jones



Army Second Lieutenants John Green and Kassandra Khan represented USU at the Wheaton High School Career fair, where they are part of a university-sponsored club that provides free tutorial services to local teenagers.

Studying is a part of life for most students at USU, because the curriculum is so challenging. As a result, many officers develop great learning habits, which several of them are passing on to younger students at nearby high schools as members of a university-sponsored tutoring club.

The club was formed by USU medical students to give young people the edge they need to thrive academically. Every Saturday, club members lead small-group study sessions covering all subject areas, so everybody receives hands-on,

personalized attention, whether they're taking advanced placement math or remedial English.

Although the club is a large commitment, especially since each tutoring session lasts about two hours, the work is also tremendously satisfying for many club members, including Army Second Lieutenant John Green, whose been volunteering at Wheaton High School in Bethesda for close to a year now.

"Education is so important," he said. "If I can make even a small difference, I'm happy to put in the hours."

## USU bids farewell to senior leader

By Christine Creenan-Jones



Donna Waechter, Ph.D.

Farewells are often bitter-sweet, especially when celebrated leaders like

Donna Waechter, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Medical Education, leave USU for new career opportunities.

The long-time administrator has accepted a leadership position at the Association of American Medical Colleges in Washington, D.C.

Although she leaves soon, Waechter's mark on the campus will remain long after her June departure.

Waechter's impact will resonate most in the School of Medicine, where she's labored tirelessly for the past 28 years to ensure only the highest academic standards prevail. An accreditation and assessment expert, Waechter has played a huge role in USU's growth and development over the past three decades.

Her success is also personified by hundreds of military physicians stationed across the globe – alumni she both counseled and mentored while working as Deputy Assistant Dean in the Office of Student Affairs, her first job at USU. Over the years, Waechter maintained a close relationship with each class, even earning two coveted Outstanding Civilian Educator Awards, a testament to both her popularity and effectiveness as a classroom instructor – another role she's taken on at USU.

Waechter's colleagues also hold her in high regard. She will be missed by many at the university, including Larry Laughlin, MD, PhD, dean of the School of Medicine, who has worked closely with Waechter for many years.

"Donna has been an incredible force on this campus for a very long time," he said. "She is a big reason why this university is successful, and while I'm sad to see her go, I also realize USU has been very lucky to have such a fine leader for so many years."



40th  
Anniversary  
Celebration



Save the Date • Sept. 20-22